

Feb. 4, 2016

To: State Superintendent Tom Torlakson, Dr. Tom Adams, and Members of the Instructional Quality Commission

Re: Implementation of AB199 and Inclusion of WWII Philippines in the History-Social Sciences Curriculum Framework

On behalf of my parents and sisters, I am writing to endorse Bataan Legacy Historical Society's efforts to implement AB199 to include instruction on the role of Filipinos in WWII Philippines. Because of the efforts of the Filipinos who served under the U.S. Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) and in the Philippine military, Japan's plans to reach Australia were delayed. This crucial moment gave the Allies and USAFFE the extra time they needed to win the war.

My father, Armando S. Lansang, is one of those Filipinos. At 16, he lied about his age to join the Philippine Scouts (USAFFE) at Fort Stotensburg, near Clark Air Base in Pampanga, Philippines. He was placed under the command of then-Lt. Richard L. Duckwall in the 86th Field Artillery and a friendship was forged.

My father was with Lt. Duckwall at the fall of Bataan in 1942 and together they marched approximately 60 miles to the Camp O'Donnell concentration camp in the horrific Bataan Death March in which 10,750 soldiers died, mostly Filipino. My Dad suffered from near starvation, malaria and dysentery the entire time. After he was incarcerated for four months, he returned home after being released. During the occupation, he did what he could to help the guerrillas. When the American forces returned to the Philippines in 1945, my father reported for duty and aided in the campaign to liberate Manila and the rest of the islands from the Imperial Japanese forces.

My father did not talk much about his wartime experience to the family, except for a few funny stories -- like the first time he walked home after boot camp. His neighbors in the barrio laughed and applauded when they saw him in uniform -- leg pants and shirt sleeves rolled up because the American-issued uniform was way too big for him.

It was only after attending a 2010 educational program organized by Ms. Cecilia Gaerlan and the Bataan Legacy Historical Society at Cal State East Bay, Hayward, that my father started to open up about his time as a Philippine Scout. For instance, I did not know that he credits Lt. Duckwall for helping him survive the Death March and that they tried several times to escape only to be driven back to the line by the sound of machine gun fire. My father cried when they were separated at Camp O'Donnell. My father saw Lt. Duckwall only once after the war. He regrets having lost touch with the lieutenant, but he has never forgotten his commanding officer.

I mention Lt. Duckwall because I believe the relationship of two men who served together -- one from the United States and one from the Philippines -- proves that the story of what happened in the Philippines during WWII is not just Filipino history, but ultimately American history.

Students cannot understand the complexities of WWII if the details of the Philippines are not included in the curriculum. By implementing AB199, we offer students a more complete and enriched history lesson. Our students need to see the crucial role that the Filipinos and Americans played in the face of overwhelming devastation and heartbreak. To ignore their

stories and contributions would be a travesty to those who served and sacrificed. I think that once students understand the complexities and inhumanity of war, they will look at today's world with a more informed view, and hopefully with more compassion and empathy.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,
Amanda Ray Lansang Pabalan, Daly City
Armando S. and Natividad Lansang, Daly City
Ardeliza Lansang, San Rafael
Alma Lansang Agcaoili, South San Francisco,
Arlene Lansang, San Bruno